

# Travellers meet police over eviction concerns

By Pat Jones

TRAVELLERS have met police chiefs to discuss concerns about the forthcoming mass eviction from Dale Farm, Billericay and flovefields.

Gratton Puxon, a long-term spokesman for Dale Farm travellers, led the group, which met Assistant Chief Constable Tony Benson, at Basildon Police Station last Friday.

Gratton said: "We are worried that bailiffs will overstep the mark and cause unnecessary damage to property on the sites."

Mr Puxon, who is also secretary of the Dale Farm Housing Association, said he hoped police would take action against criminal activity or breaches of safety law, from the bailiffs.

He said: "There are other issues that trouble the travellers like their chapel onsite, which they hope won't be destroyed."

Mr Puxon also hoped for assurances that no heavy machinery would be allowed on site while there were children present.

The Travellers are looking at a possible plan to relocate to a site in Gardiners Lane, Basildon, as a temporary measure, and are trying to arrange a meeting with Basildon Council to discuss this.

Tony Ball, leader of the council, said the Travellers would have to contact the government department which owned the site first, and then submit a planning application to the council.

He also reiterated his commitment to carry out the evictions by April



2011.

■ Police and Travellers will meet again once Basildon Council has issued its 28-day warning notice for the operation of the evictions.

**PROTEST:** Ann Kobayashi from Wickford Catholic Church, Professor Thomas Acton from Greenwich University, Mary Ann McCarthy, Dale Farm resident,

Professor Bob Watt from Essex University and Gratton Puxon were part of a delegation to meet police in Basildon about Traveller concerns.

Picture by Mark Cleveland